

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 10-32 have been rejected as being obvious over US. Patent No. 6,364,735 to Bristow or U.S. Patent No. 6,361,396 to Snyder. These references are directed towards a master toy which identifies object brought into its proximity. The sensing circuitry of the toy is specifically designed to not require that the master toy and the object be placed in physical contact with one another. Bristow/Snyder teaches that this eliminates "the need for electrical contacts, locating pins and surfaces, and/or switching pins" and, as a result, "less design constraints are placed on the toy designer regarding size, shape, and texture." The disclosed examples of master toys include a doll and a fake "talking" computer. With the doll, objects such as a piece of broccoli, a toothbrush, a tea cup, and an ice cream cone are placed in proximity to the doll's mouth to invoke a corresponding response. With the "talking" computer, the computer asks questions to which the child responds to by placing an object next to the computer.

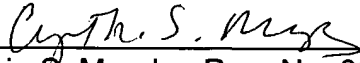
The Examiner appears to admit that Bristow/Snyder do not show or suggest a plurality of attachable items that can be selectively attached to a host structure. However, she contends that it would have been obvious to attach items to the Bristow/Snyder master toy for "purpose of creating an image of the toy when attached." It is respectfully submitted that the applied art teaches against attachable objects and, in any event, the attachability feature of the present invention is more than "a mere design choice." This prior art does not teach object-identification technology for the purpose of enhancing a toy with attachable objects, but rather so that such attachment is not necessary. Particularly, Bristow/Snyder "utilizes the technique of inductive coupling to allow a master toy to identify an object placed in proximity to its sensing circuit without requiring the toy and the object to be in physical contact."

Claims 4-9 are rejected as being obvious over Bristow or Snyder in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0171063 to Soto. These claims likewise set forth a plurality of attachable items and, as explained above, Bristow/Snyder does not show or suggest attaching items to a host structure. Soto discloses "shopping" toy 99 comprising a shopping cart 100 and an electronic scanner 98. The shopping cart 100 includes a basket 110 adapted to hold scannable shopping items 95. The child is able to mimic "grown-up" activity by scanning an item 95 to invoke an appropriate audio response (e.g., "you found one carton of milk!") and then place the scanned item in the container. The Soto shopping toy would not work in its intended manner if its scannable items 95 were attachable to the electronic scanner 98. Accordingly, whatever Soto may or may not teach regarding bar codes, the applied art cannot show or suggest the toy defined by claims 4-9.

In view of the foregoing, this application is believed to be in a condition for allowance and an early action to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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